ENCHANTED TALES

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Thumbelina

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ENCHANTED TALES

Thumbelina

NEW SEASONS
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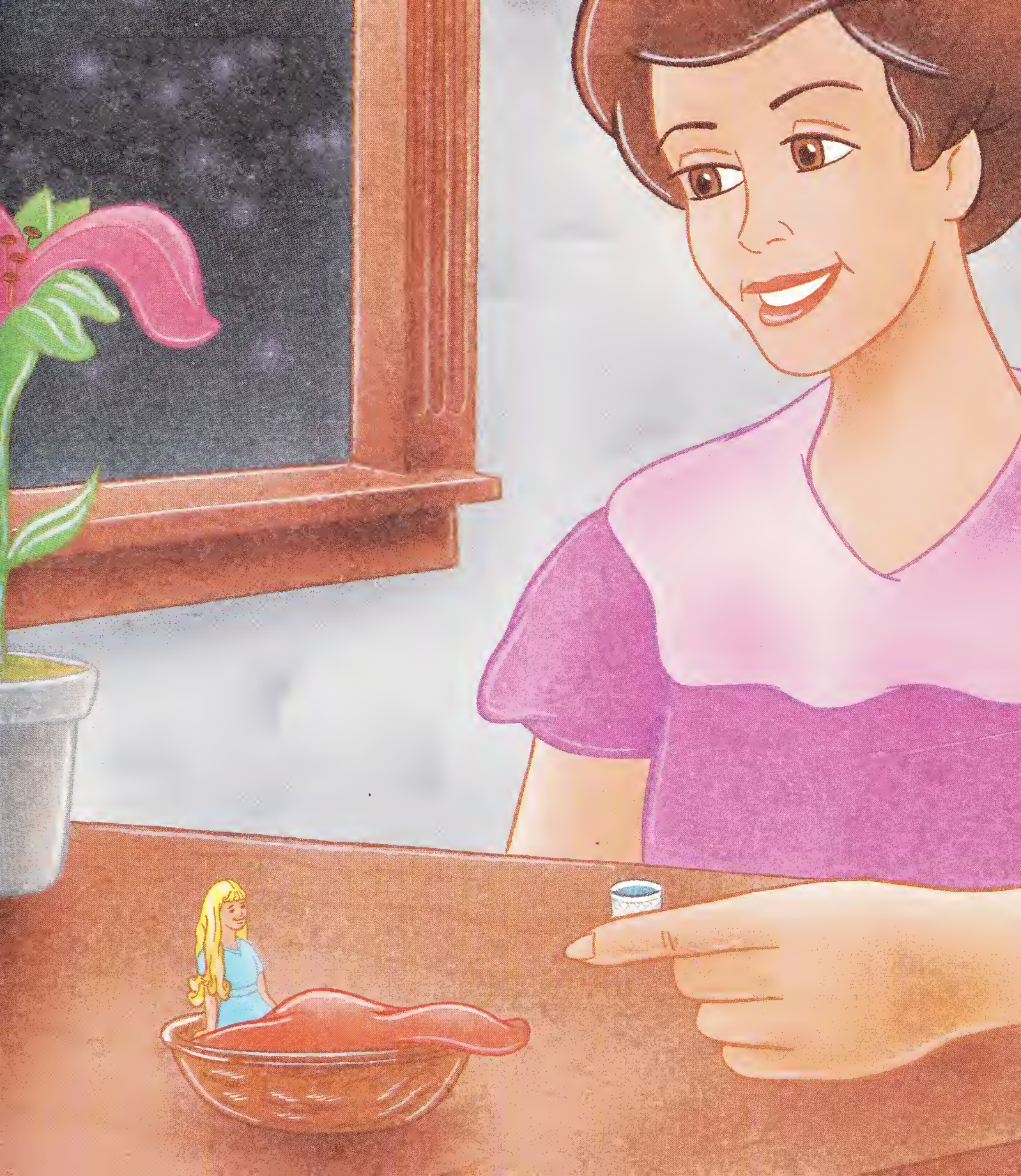
Once upon a time, a childless woman wanted a little girl very much—so much that she set aside her fears and begged the help of a witch.

"A little girl you shall have, dearie!" the witch cackled. She gave the woman a seed to plant, and lo and behold, a single flower soon bloomed. When the pink flower opened, out popped the loveliest— and littlest—blonde-haired girl, no bigger than the woman's thumb! She was named Thumbelina and given great luxuries, such as a walnut-shell cradle with a rose-petal blanket and a thimble of nectar to drink morning, noon, and evening.

One night, as Thumbelina slept, a wart-faced toad spied her through the window. "What a delightful bride she'll make for my son!" croaked the mother toad.



The old toad seized the cradle with the sleeping girl in it and hopped off to a nearby stream.

"Ribbitt! Chuggarrumpff!" croaked her son.

"Quiet," the mother shushed as she set the cradle on a lily pad, "or you'll wake her!"

At daybreak, Thumbelina stretched, yawned—and saw that something was dreadfully wrong. The mother toad introduced her son to Thumbelina. "I just know you two will be happy once you're married!" croaked the mother toad. The two toads went off to build a new home for the couple, and Thumbelina began to weep. A school of pike heard her sobs and decided to help. They bit through the stalk of her lily pad, and with a wave to the helpful pike, Thumbelina drifted away on the water.

As Thumbelina floated downstream, a black beetle flying overhead noticed her. "What an interesting creature," he thought. "I'll bring her home to live with me."

He swooped down and snatched her off to a dim forest. His fellow beetles gathered around and looked at Thumbelina carefully.

"Ugh! Look at all that long, shiny hair," said one.

"And she has only two legs!" said another. The beetles decided that they had no use for such an unattractive thing, and they sent her away, even though the beetle who brought her secretly wanted her to stay. Thumbelina was left to wander alone in the forest as the cold winter winds began to blow.

As she wandered, shivering and hungry, Thumbelina stumbled over a small hole in the ground.

"Who's there?" demanded a squeaky voice. But Thumbelina's lips were too frozen to move.

"Dear, dear," said a field mouse as she poked her nose out of the hole. "Come inside before you catch your death!" The mouse could be quite friendly at times, and she offered to let Thumbelina stay the winter. "But you must keep house and tell stories at teatime," insisted the mouse. "And do the same for my neighbor," she added. "He's a wealthy mole who, by the way, is looking for a wife—"

At that instant, a furry head with a funny pink nose poked through the entrance.

The mole offered to take Thumbelina and the mouse to see the new tunnel he had dug. On the way, they passed the frozen body of a swallow. Thumbelina felt sorry for the dead bird, but neither the mole nor the mouse seemed to care.

That night, Thumbelina went back to where the bird lay. Listening at his breast, she heard the faintest heartbeat, so she covered him with a grass blanket and put her arms around him. After a while, the bird opened his eyes. "Where am I?" chirped the swallow, coming to his senses. "You've saved me! However can I thank you?"

Meanwhile, the mouse, who wanted a maid, and the mole, who wanted a wife and a maid, agreed that when summer came, Thumbelina and the mole would be married.

The day came for the swallow to leave. He asked Thumbelina to go with him, but she thought it would be rude for her to leave after the mouse had been so nice to her. The swallow whispered good-bye and sadly flew off.

Down below, the mouse called for yet another teatime story, and when Thumbelina returned, the mouse told her that the mole had asked for her hand in marriage.

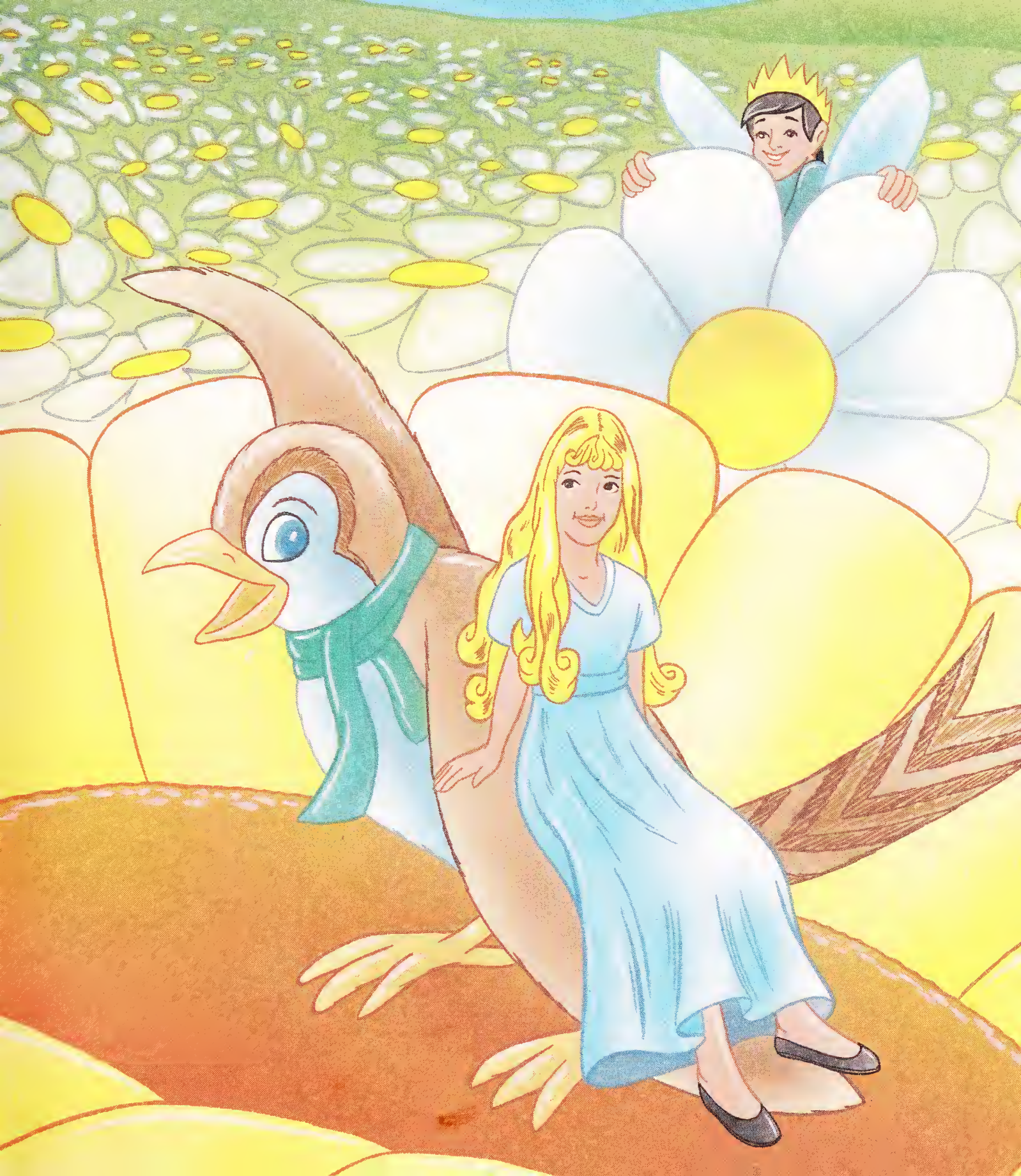
Thumbelina did not want to marry the mole, but the mouse insisted that she must. Soon, the wedding day arrived, and so did the mole, wearing a long, dark coat and carrying two plain gold bands.

Poor Thumbelina ran above ground. "Oh, why didn't I fly away before?" she cried.

Suddenly, a winged shadow passed overhead. "Better late than never!" called the swallow. "Will you come with me now?" Thumbelina joyfully climbed on his back, and the two flew south to a magical land of clear waters, powdery beaches, and flowers that blossomed all year.

The swallow lowered Thumbelina onto a daisy and flew up into the sky. The girl looked all around—and noticed a handsome young man perched on a nearby flower. He had transparent wings and a gold crown, and best of all he was just about Thumbelina's size. Their eyes met, and they fell in love instantly.

"I am King of the Daisies," said the young man. "I have thousands of subjects, but none like you! Be my Queen!" he asked Thumbelina as he kissed her hand.



"I will gladly be your Queen," Thumbelina joyfully cried.

The King's subjects flew to Thumbelina and presented her with a pair of delicate wings that fit her perfectly. The couple then soared up into the cloudless blue sky where, flying in ever-widening circles, the loyal swallow waited for them.

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